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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CH
SUBJECT: EMANICPATION FROM GHOSTS AND MENTAL SHACKLES: THE TENG MEDIA CAMPAIGN

REF: (A) HONG KONG 7167, (B) PEKING 1927, (C) PEKING 2001, (D) HONG KONG 7982.

SUMMARY: A MEDIA CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN EARLY JUNE SEEKS TO CONVEY VICE CHAIRMAN TENG HSIAO-PING'S MESSAGE THAT POLICY MUST BE BASED ON PRACTICAL EXPEREINCE AND NOT ON BLIND FAITH IN MAOIST DOGMA. THIS CAMPAIGN IS AIMED AT THOSE WHO, FEARFUL OF RETRIBUTION FOR RIGHTIST TENDENCIES, PASSIVELY RESIST IMPLEMENTATION OF TENG'S POLICIES. PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLES ON JUNE 22, 24 AND JULY 1 PORTRAY MAO'S THOUGH AS CHANGEABLE AND FALLIBLE. IN ADDITION, THE ARTICLES ATTEMPT TO BUOLD A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK TO JUSTIFY CURRENT AND FUTURE POLICY INITIATIVES, AS WELL AS TO PREEMPT THOSE WHO WOULD ATTACK THOSE POLICIES AS REVISIONIST. THE INTENSITY OF THIS MEDIA CAMPAIGN, COMBINED WITH EVIDENCE OF RENEWED PRESSURE FOR ADDITIONAL
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PURGES, SUGGESTS INCREASED TENSION WITHIN THE POLITUBRO. WHILE CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO THESE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING (TO HIM) ATTEMPTS TO DEMYTHOLOGIZE MAO, THE ON-GOING NATIONAL FINANCE AND TRADE CONFERENCE WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNE TIME FOR SUCH A RESPONSE. END SUMMARY.

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1. A CONCERTED MEDIA EFFORT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT SINCE THE PLA POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE IN LATE MAY/EARLY JUNE TO SELL VICE CHAIRMAN TENG HSIAO-PING'S MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE (REFTEL A) THAT MAO'S THOUGHT IS NOT A DOGMA TO BE INVOKED MECHANICALLY IN ISOLATION FROM EXPERIENCE, BUT IS SIMPLY ONE STAGE IN THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM.

2. THE EFFECT OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO DE-MYTHOLOGIZE MAO. SINCE TENG AS EARLY AS 1956 WAS CRITICAL OF THE PERSONALITY CULT, THIS EFFECT IS CLEARLY INTENTIONAL. THE PRIMARY TARGET, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE GHOST OF MAO, BUT RATHER THOSE WHO ARE HAUNTED BY THAT GHOST; THAT IS, THE GREAT MASS OF CADRES WHO WERE TRAUMATIZED BY THE RADICALISM OF MAO'S LATE YEARS AND WHO NOW OUT OF FEAR AND TREPIDATION HALF-HEARTEDLY IMPLEMENT, OR WORSE, STILL RESIST TENG'S PRAGMATIC, ELITIST POLICIES.

3. THE CURRENT MEDIA CAMPAIGN EVOLVED FROM EARLIER CRITICISM OF CADRE WHO ALWAYS "LEAN TO THE LEFT," HAVING LEARNED FROM PAST PENDULAR SWINGS THAT LEFTIST ERROS WERE LESS PIKELY TO BE CONSIDERED CARDINAL SINS THAN RIGHTIST DEVIATIONS. EXPOSURE OF THIS FEAR OF BEING BRANDED "RIGHTIST" EVIDENTLY HAS NOT BEEN ENOUGH TO ERADICATE RESISTANCE, HOWEVER. TENG'S CALL TO "SHATTER THE SPIRITUAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FETTERS TO EFFECT A GREAT EMANICPATION OF OUR MINDS" AT THE PLA POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE WAS THE FIRST SALVO IN THE RECENT SERIES OF ATTACKS ON THE LEGACY OF MAO AND THE EXTREME LEFTIST TENDENCIES WHICH DOMINATED FROM THE CR TO THE FALL OF THE GANG OF FOUR.

4. A JUNE 22 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL SOUGHT TO REDEFINE MAO'S SLOGAN, REPEATED BY HUA AT THE PLA POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE, "POLITICS IS THE COMMANDER, THE SOUL IN EVERYTHING," TO MEAN THAT THE NEW CRITERION OF GOOD POLITICS IS THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PRODUCTION. THIS CREATIVE INTERPRETATION EXEMPLIFIES THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE SUPPORTERS OF TENG ARE WILLING TO DISTORT MAO TO LEGITIMIZE THEIR OWN POLICIES.

5. THE ARTICLES OF JUNE 24 (REFTEL B) AND JULY 1 (REFTEL C) SOUGHT TO USE MAO TO DE-MYTHOLOGIZE MAO BY POINTING TO THE CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAO'S OWN THOUGHT THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCE AND THE MISTAKES WHICH MAO, HIMSELF, ADMITTED. THESE ARTICLES SEEK BOTH TO DESTORY RELIANCE ON MAO'S THOUGHT AS AN

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AUTOMATIC GUIDE TO PROBLEM SOLVING AND TO BUILD A LEGITIMATE AND LOGICAL FRAMWEORK TO JUSITFY CURRENT AND FUTURE POLICY INITIATIVES. THESE ARTICLES ALSO SEEK TO PREEMPITVELY ATTACK THOSE WHO WOULD CRITICIZE SUCH POLICIES AS REVISIONIST BY LCAIMING THAT SUCH INDIVIDUALS ARE STILL NOT FREE OF THE MENTAL SHACKLES OF THE GANG OF FOUR'S "FAKE LEFT" VIEWPOINT.

6. THE CURRENT MEDIA STORM, ALONG WITH THE REECENT PRECIPTIOUS PURGE OF ONE PROVINCE-LEVEL FIRST SECRETARY AND A STRONG LULTIMATIUM GIVEN TO ANOTHER (REFTEL D) INDICATES RENEWED PRESSURE BY THE TENG GROUP OF PARTY VETERANS ON THOSE WHO HOPE TO PRESERVE A LARGER PORTION OF THE MAOIST LEGACY AND TO NARROWLY LIMIT
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THE SCOPE OF PURGES. WE BELIVE THIS PRESSURE IS LIKELY TO RESULT IN INCREASED TENSION WITHIN THE POLITBURO AND FURTHER STRAIN ITS UNITY. CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG, WHO OWES HIS POSITION MORE TO THE TOUCH OF MAO THAN TO HIS OWN LEADERSHIP RECORD, HAS NOT YET REACTED PUBLICLY TO THESE RECENT ATTACKS ON MAO WHICH POTENTIALLY UNDERMINE HIS OWN LEGITIMACY. IF HUA IS TO REPLY, HIS ANTICIPATED SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL FINANCE AND TRADE CONFERENCE NOW IN PROGRESS WOULD PROVIDE A CONVENIENT FORUM.
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